



the Arctic. We have noted his suggestion of cooperation on energy, science and the environment among other areas.

We are pleased that he indicated the Soviet Union's interest in the creation of an Arctic Sciences Council, towards which Canada, Norway and other countries have been working. I understand you have been discussing this proposal and the concept of an Arctic Basin Council.

We have noted his interest in the development of cultural links among Arctic peoples. In circumpolar relations few things are as important as contacts between the Inuit, the Arctic native peoples of Canada, Greenland, the United States and the Soviet Union. It is our hope that the Soviet Union will agree, for the first time, to attend the next Inuit Circumpolar Conference in 1989 and the Inuit Youth Camp in 1988, which Canada will host.

So we welcome Mr. Gorbachev's interest in the North. But we need — and have asked for — clarification on what it means in practice. And we will continue to pursue our own goals and interests in the Arctic.

The Murmansk speech also brings us to the issue of peace and security. The world watched last night the scene in Washington as General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan signed an agreement for the first-ever reductions in nuclear weapons. This historic disarmament agreement is solid proof of an improvement in East-West relations.

Peace and security are vital issues as well in the world's North. It is just since the 1950s that the Arctic has become a focus of military activity, and thus of more strategic concern for all of us.

Canada and Norway share membership in NATO. We both know that collective defence is necessary to deter aggression and to protect our way of life.

NATO has given us an unprecedented generation of peace. The Alliance is indispensable for defence and for encouraging arms control and disarmament. While the dynamics of East-West

relations may change, while relationships may change even within the West, Canada's commitment to NATO has increased.

Each Alliance partner must strive to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of its contribution. Shortly after its election Prime Minister Mulroney's Government launched a review of Canada's defence policy. We found there was a serious gap between our commitments and our capabilities. We are taking steps to close that gap. We found our reserves were inadequate, our equipment out of date. These problems are being addressed.

We also found that our commitments were too numerous, scattered, and inefficient. We could certainly deploy troops in northern Norway. However, a recent exercise demonstrated that sustaining them would not be militarily feasible. The attempt to do so would also weaken substantially our forces in Central Europe.

You are well aware of the resulting decisions. In Europe, Canada's efforts are now to be concentrated on the Central Front. That will make our Alliance contribution more effective. And that will strengthen the Alliance — and the ultimate security of Norway — as a whole.

Of course Canada will continue to commit a battalion group to the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force for the protection of the northern flank.

In the Atlantic we are upgrading substantially the naval and air resources essential to maintaining sea lines of communication from North America to Western Europe through the acquisition of nuclear-propelled submarines and of modern surface vessels.

In our North we are replacing our outdated northern radar network by a modern North Warning System. Our air fields are being upgraded. More aircraft are being deployed, the number of surveillance flights increased. More military exercises are being held in the North. Surveillance systems are being developed to detect potentially hostile submarines.

The nuclear submarines we are acquiring for Atlantic and Pacific operations will also be used to detect and counter hostile naval activity in the Arctic, especially under ice where no other method of exercising control is effective.

In his Murmansk speech, Mr. Gorbachev proposed:

1. creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Northern Europe;
2. limitation of military activity in the waters of the Baltic, North, Norwegian and Greenland seas;
3. examination of a total ban on naval activity in mutually agreed zones.

Canada is interested in developing realistic policies aimed at enhancing the security and stability of the Arctic region but we have serious reservations about these proposals. Our installations in the North, which I described earlier, are all defensive. Proposals to demilitarize our North would imply that we abandon our defences.

Similarly, proposals to declare the North a nuclear-weapon-free zone or to restrict naval movements in areas such as the Norwegian Sea overlook the fact that the nuclear-weapons threat is global, not regional. Both East and West have massive nuclear forces capable of mutual annihilation — weapons on land, sea and air, all over the globe.

Some may be in the Arctic. Some may pass over the Arctic. But the threat relates to the East-West rivalry, not the Arctic. Declaring the Arctic a nuclear-weapon-free zone or restricting certain naval movements there would do nothing to reduce the threat from these weapons. It would be destabilizing for other regions.

Mr. Gorbachev appears to focus exclusively on the Western Arctic without discussing the Barents Sea or other waters adjacent to the USSR. He does not offer any detail as to how a ban of naval activity would be verified or enforced. Obviously, it would be inappropriate to discuss the Western Arctic and not the Soviet archipelago.